Calvin UNIVERSITY 1876

Background: On 25 February 1934, about a million Nazi Party officials gathered at points around Germany to swear an oath to Adolf Hitler. This is an excerpt from the speech Rudolf Hess gave on the occasion, which was broadcast to the nation.

The source: "Der Eid auf Adolf Hitler," Rudolf Hess, *Reden* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1938), pp. 10-14.

The Oath to Adolf Hitler

Speech by Rudolf Hess on 25 February 1934

German men, German women, German boys, German girls, over a million of you are gathered in many places in all of Germany!

On this the anniversary of the proclamation of the party's program, you will together swear an oath of loyalty and obedience to Adolf Hitler. You will display to the world what has long been obvious to you, and what you have expressed in past years, often unconsciously.

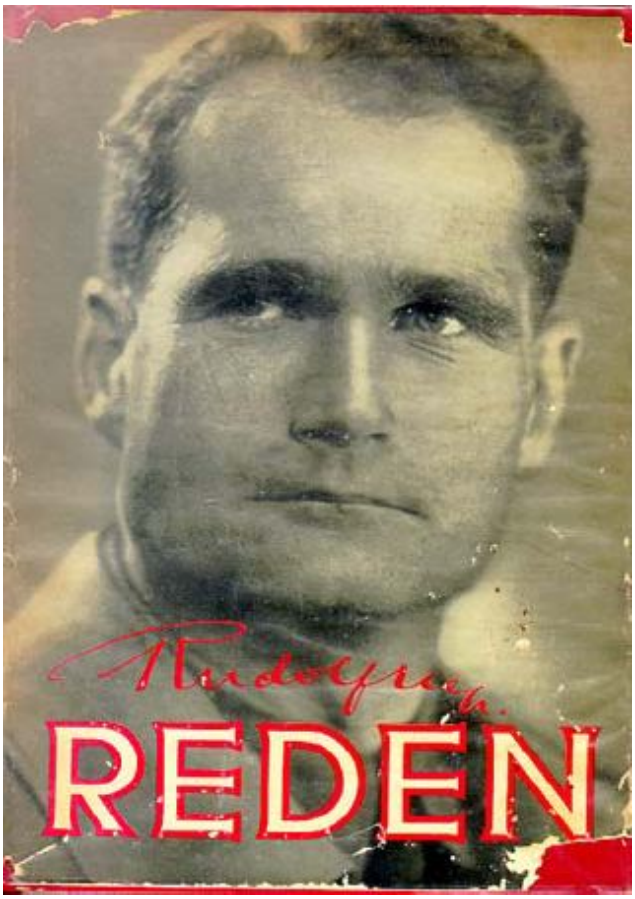
You are swearing your oath on a holiday that Germany celebrates for the first time: Heroes' Memorial Day. We lower our flags in remembrance of those who lived as heroes, and who died as heroes. We lower the flags before the giants of our past, before those who fought for Germany, before the millions who fought in the World War, before those who died preparing the way for the new Reich. I name Horst Wessel because he has become a symbol for us, and remember through him all those "shot by the Red Front and Reaction."

Woe to the people that fails to honor its heroes! It will cease producing them, cease knowing them. Heroes spring from the essence of their people. A people without heroes is a people without leaders, for only a heroic leader is a true leader able to withstand the challenge of difficult times. The rise or fall of a people can be determined by the presence or absence of a leader.

We do not want to forget the mothers, women, and children who gave their dearest, often their provider, and bear their fate with quiet heroism.

The battle-ready manly heroes and the quiet sacrifices of mothers and women are holy examples of loyalty for us Germans. The flags that we now raise once more are the symbols of this loyalty, which for Nordic mankind is closely bound to heroism!

Loyalty not only in deed, but in character is demanded of you. Loyalty of character often demands no less heroic virtue than does loyalty in deed. Loyalty in character is unbreakable loyalty, a loyalty that knows no ifs or buts, that knows no weakening, Loyalty in character means absolute obedience that does not question the results of the order nor its reasons, but rather



obeys for the sake of obedience itself. Such obedience is an expression of heroic character when following the order leads to personal disadvantage or seems even to contradict one's personal convictions. Adolf Hitler's strength as a leader is that he almost always works through the power of his persuasion; rarely does he command. He must know, however, that when he commands, or allows a command to be given, that it will be obeyed absolutely, down to the last block warden.

The power and effectiveness of a good organization is even greater when discipline prevails. The greater its obedience even in small things, the more clearly it marches to the right or the left depending on the command of the leader, the more exactly the command to march in short or long steps is followed, the more surely the Führer can take the steps necessary to realize the National Socialist program.

All we National Socialists work for the realization of this program, just as we once worked to gain control of the state. We fought for the souls of the farmers, for the souls of the workers, for the souls of the middle class, for the souls of men, for the souls of women, for the souls of the old, for the souls of the young — we the members of the main organization of the NSDAP as well as the men of the Labor Service, the leaders of the affiliated organizations of the party such as the National Socialist women. With the same will young men and women strive toward the same goal, to become those who will replace us as the masters of Germany's fate.

Hitler Youths, you have given the same absolute loyalty to the Führer that Germany's young volunteers gave twenty years ago at Langemarck, which demanded their heroic deaths for our people and the Reich. You have made the youth of Langemarck your model. You have the good fortune to live in a Reich that the best warriors of 1914 could only dream of — a Reich that for all eternity will remain united if you do your duty. For you, doing your duty means: Obey the Führer's orders without question! You will be the best living memorial to the dead comrades of the first years of the war when you maintain discipline in your ranks.

The more a Hitler Youth leader demand discipline from his boys, the more he must display it himself. He must demand discipline from them above all when his boys long for glorious freedom or wild behavior. It should be easier for the youth of today to accept discipline and subordination — combined with an appreciation of the accomplishments of the older generation — since the older generation is the generation of the World War. I know how you were persecuted, maligned, hated and mocked because of your faith in the Führer. I know how many of your comrades sacrificed their young lives! I know it well!

But I also know that all the dangers and sorrows that a Hitler Youth suffered, even in the most Communist neighborhood in the years before the seizure of power, are not comparable to the dangers and sorrows that a front soldier experienced in a single day! Never forget that when your leader, who endured the battleground for us, demands self-discipline of you.

I say to the political leaders what I said to your comrades in *Gau* Thuringia as they were sworn in last year: Be true to Hitler's spirit! Ask in all that you do: What would the Führer do. If you act accordingly, you will not go wrong!

Being true to Hitler's spirit means knowing that a leader has not only rights, but above all duties. Being true to Hitler's spirit means always being a model. "To be a leader is to be an example," just as Hitler and his work are an example for you. Being true to Hitler's spirit means being modest and unassuming. Being true to Hitler's spirit means remaining a thorough National Socialist in good times and bad. Being a thorough National Socialist means to think ever and only on the whole National Socialist German people. It means that no matter what, always to be a servant of the total National Socialism of Adolf Hitler, to be a fully conscious, heartfelt follower of the Führer above all else.

Be ever a servant of the whole, within the movement as well, and never forget that only the whole movement, not a part of it, can guarantee victory and the conquest of the future.

Be ever aware that, wherever you are, you owe thanks to the Führer, for his leadership enabled every victory. Wherever you are, be it high or low, work for his movement, and therefore for Germany. Remember what Adolf Hitler says: it makes no difference if one is a street cleaner or a professor, as long as he works for the whole and does his duty.

The reward for your labors is the feeling of having done one's duty for the movement, for Adolf Hitler, for Germany.

All of you, whether political leader, SA, SS or Hitler Youth share a common pride: Being a member of Adolf Hitler's NSDAP!

You are all the scouts and the defenders of the National Socialist army of the movement. You are each indispensable and equal. Each of you is as unique in history as National Socialism itself. You are typically National Socialist.

SA, SS, and political leaders have a common tradition, embodied in the "Old Guard." It includes all who fought, sacrificed, suffered, risked or gave their lives for Germany's resurrection under National Socialism. It has the honor to have bled and sacrificed for our people's future. You have earned the thanks of all who enjoy the blessings of life in a new Reich. It is a Reich led by men who share a desire for national freedom, socialist community and peace in dignity and honor.

Political leaders! Leaders of the Labor Service, the forces of labor! Women's leaders, HJ leaders! Leaders of the BDM! You will now take an oath to Adolf Hitler!

Your oath is not a mere formality; you do not swear this oath to someone unknown to you. You do not swear in hope, but with certainty. Fate has made it easy for you to take this oath without condition or reservation. Never in history has a people taken an oath to a leader with such absolute confidence as the German people have in Adolf Hitler. You have the enormous joy of taking an oath to a man who is the embodiment of a leader. You take an oath to the fighter who demonstrated his leadership over a decade, who always acts correctly and who always chose the right way, even when at times the larger part of his movement failed to understand why.

You take an oath to a man whom you know follows the laws of providence, which he obeys independently of the influence of earthly powers, who leads the German people rightly, and who will guide Germany's fate. Through your oath you bind yourselves to a man who — that is our faith — was sent to us by higher powers. Do not seek Adolf Hitler with your mind. You will find him through the strength of your hearts!

Adolf Hitler is Germany and Germany is Adolf Hitler. He who takes an oath to Hitler takes an oath to Germany!

Swear to great Germany, to whose sons and daughters throughout the world I send our best wishes.

[Throughout Germany people take the oath.]

This has been the greatest common taking of an oath in history!

We greet the Führer!

[Page copyright © 1998 by Randall Bytwerk. No unauthorized reproduction. My e-mail address is available on the FAQ page.]

Go to the 1933-1945 Page.

Go to the German Propaganda Archive Home Page.